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FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
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INFO RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 0471
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SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ARP, G/TIP, EUR/UMB

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KTIP](#) [EAIR](#) [BO](#) [AE](#)
SUBJECT: UAE INCREASING INVOLVEMENT WITH BELARUS

Sensitive but unclassified.

¶1. (SBU) Belarus has had an Embassy in Abu Dhabi since 1999, yet the UAE is just now sending its first ever envoy to Minsk. Ambassador-designate Mohamed Abdullah al-Raisi will open the new mission (a first-time ambassador is also being sent to Argentina). Signs of increased interaction between the UAE and Belarus include a rather unexpected initiative in the field of anti-TIP (trafficking in persons) efforts. We also hear informally from MFA that Belarus is (one of many) favored hunting destinations for the UAE leadership -- specifically President Khalifa.

¶2. (SBU) On September 17, in a campaign to highlight anti-TIP efforts in the UAE, local media reported that the UAEG had signed MoUs with Belarus and Armenia to provide police training. Local police are expected to travel to Belarus (no dates announced) to benefit from a Minsk training center reportedly established to help officers in identifying and working with TIP victims. Discussions between UAE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Anwar Gargash and Belarus' Foreign Minister Sergei Martynov at a Vienna forum on human trafficking in February apparently led to the relationship. A Gargash aide characterized the Minsk center as experienced in the anti-TIP field, given the country's position as both a source and destination country for trafficking victims.

¶3. (SBU) As further evidence of increased ties between the UAE and Belarus, Etihad, the UAE's "national airline" headquartered in Abu Dhabi, in August became the first Gulf airline to offer flights to Minsk. Etihad is currently promoting Minsk as a holiday destination. The UAE has also received a new Ambassador from Belarus recently, who is still waiting to present his credentials (along with Ambassadors from 16 other countries, including the U.S.).
OLSON